

24

MINUTES

OF THE

TWENTY-FOURTH ANNUAL MEETING

OF THE

PEARL RIVER BAPTIST ASSOCIATION.

CONVENED AT HOPEWELL CHURCH,

COPIAH COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI,

SEPTEMBER 9TH, 1843.

MONTICELLO:
M. H. SMITH, PRINTER.

1843.

MINUTES, &c.

HOPEWELL, September 9th, 1843.

THE Pearl River Baptist Association met at the time and place appointed, and Br. A. McKenzie preached the introductory sermon from Mat. xvi, 16—"And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

The Association then, after a short space of time, assembled in the meeting house, and was called to order in the usual form by Br. Jesse Crawford, the former Moderator.

Letters from thirty-one churches were read, and the delegates took their seats. Jesse Crawford was re-elected Moderator, and Norvell Robertson, Jr., Clerk.

Br. Breakfield was appointed reading clerk.

On invitation, the church at Bethlehem, Simpson county, presented a petitionary letter, and was received into this Association.

Visiting ministers were invited to seats with us.

Received correspondence from sister associations, viz: From the Mississippi, a letter and parcel of minutes, by their messenger, Br. T. M. Bond—Br. Reeves, his colleague, failed by reason of indisposition: From the Union, a letter and parcel of minutes by their messengers, Samuel Thigpen and William Allen: From the Leaf River, we received no communication: From the Mount Pisgah, a package of their minutes by Br. William Denson, one of their messengers, the other failed to meet us: A letter and parcel of minutes were also received from the Eastern Louisiana Association, recently organized, but their messengers failed: Agreed to accept her correspondence.

Agreed to continue correspondence with sister associations, and appointed Br. McKenzie to write to the Mississippi; Brs. Magee and Fortenberry, messengers: Br. Fortenberry to write to the Union; Brs. Sandifer and James Murray, messengers: Br. Magee to write to the Leaf River; Brs. McKenzie and Walker, messengers: Br. V. T. Powell to write to the Mount Pisgah; Mrs. Honea and A. Murray, messengers: Br. Crawford to write to the Eastern Louisiana; Brs. Crawford and Magee, messengers.

Appointed committees as follows, viz:

On Preaching: J. Sandifer, W. T. Sandifer, and E. Barron.

On Finance: McKenzie, Simmons, and Carter.

To arrange the business and revise the Circular: McKenzie, Fortenberry, and Thigpen, with the Moderator and Clerk.

On Nominations: McKenzie, Magee, and Burns.

Br. J. Sandifer, from the committee on preaching, reported that they had appointed Brs. Crawford, Robertson, and Bond, to preach on the Lord's day, and Br. Price to close the services.

Adjourned 'till Monday, 9 o'clock, A. M.

Prayer by Br. Bond.

MONDAY, September 11th, 1843.

Association met pursuant to adjournment.

Br. Robertson prayed.

Br. McKenzie, from the committee of arrangement and revision, made a report which was received and agreed to.

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The Circular Letter being an extract from a work entitled the "Great Commission," by Harris, was read and adopted.

Letters to corresponding associations were read and approved.

The Treasurer having been providentially prevented from attending the Association, the state of the treasury was not reported. The receipts for the present year were—for associational purposes, \$182 32; and for missionary purposes, \$119 07, which was consigned to the care of Br. M. E. Carter.

The committee on nominations made a report, which was received, and committee discharged.

Br. James Murray was appointed to preach the introductory to the next Association, and Br. Calvin Magee his alternate.

Br. A. McKenzie was requested to prepare a Circular.

On petition, Letters of Dismission were granted to the church at Mountain Hill.

Agreed to hold the next Association with the church at Strong River, Simpson county, on Saturday preceding the second Lord's day in September, 1844.

At the request of the church at Mount Zion, Simpson county, the Association agreed to publish the following document:

STATE OF MISSISSIPPI, Scott County, July 17, 1841,

Know all persons to whom these presents may come:

Whereas there has been a certificate sent up, and by the request of Mount Zion Church, published by the Pearl River Association, concerning certain charges against Brs. John Guynes and John M. Finley, in favor of Br. Murray, on testimony of Elder Stephen Berry; whereupon it appears that Antioch Church upon testimony produced by said brethren, acquitted them from said charges in that publication—the church took Br. Berry, also, under dealings. Whereas Br. Berry acknowledged that he signed an unwarranted certificate, and the reason why, was under the consideration of the confidence he had in Br. Murray's coming forward to his church, which he considered would be time enough to object to certain items in the bill of charges, to wit: the name of the woman concerned, and other things which he is sorry for. Br. Murray also acknowledged that he did not recollect making the promise, but if he did make the promise to that effect, he was wrong in not complying with it—and also stated that if he had understood the true nature of the case, he never would have made the publication against the Brs. Finley and Guynes.

We, the committee, appointed by said Church, have hereunto subscribed our names, done in conference, and signed by order of the church.

Allason Philips, Md., Lee P. Morrell, E. E.

Allason Philips, Cader Price, William Denson, Stephen Berry, James Murray, Lee P. Morrell.

Dear Brethren—On a settlement of this affair, we wish you to insert the above on your minutes.

JOS. NORWOOD, Clark.

Mount Zion Church, Simpson county.

Resolved, That the churches composing this Association, be requested to state in their letters, next year, the number of colored persons in fellowship, and the number of colored persons baptized annually.

Whereas, The Baptist State Convention of this State, has solicited this Association to co-operate with them in their efforts to advance the interests of the Redeemer's Kingdom—Therefore

Resolved, That this Association request the churches composing the same, to signify their wishes in relation to said co-operation next year.

The clerk was requested to superintend the printing and distribution of the minutes of this Association.

Brs. Wm. Denson and Samuel Thigpen appeared as messengers from the Convention of the Baptist Denomination of Mississippi, and were received.

The ordinary business of the Association being completed, proceeded to the consideration of missionary business.

From statements made by individual members of the former Board, it appeared that they had been providentially prevented from holding a meeting, in consequence of which there was no report on the subject.

A committee consisting of Brs. Bond, McKenzie, and Thigpen was appointed to draw up rules and by-laws, for the Missionary Board.

Br. Crawford was appointed to preach the annual Missionary Sermon, and Br. Fortenberry his alternate.

The committee appointed to prepare rules and by-laws, reported the following, which were adopted:

1 The officers of the Board shall consist of a President, a Vice President, and a Secretary—who shall be elected by the Board.

2 It shall be the duty of the President to preside at all meetings of the Board, and call a meeting of the Board when necessary.

3 In the absence of the President it shall be the duty of the Vice President to preside; in the absence of both, the Board shall appoint one of their number to preside.

4 The President with five other members shall form a quorum to do business, in case of the Chairman's absence, any six members.

5 It shall be the duty of the Secretary to keep a correct record of the actings and doings of the Board.

6 It shall be the duty of the Board to appoint Missionaries and Agents, whose duty it shall be to report to the Board. The Board shall also fix their bounds.—Which Board shall have power to draw on the Treasurer for money to pay them.

7 It shall be the duty of the Board to report annually, their actings and doings to the Associations.

Resolved, That it is the sense and wish of this Association, that our Missionaries do not confine their labors to the limits of this State.

The following persons were appointed the Missionary Board for the ensuing year, viz:

Jesse Crawford, Wm. Fortenberry, James Murray, Wm. Barnes, James Mitchell, Rezin Burns, Benj. S. Waller, V. T. Powell, Hosea Davis, Wm. Simmons, Simeon Ross, Joshua Sandifer, Alex. Murray, Wilkes Honea, N. Robertson, Jr.

Resolved, That our Missionaries act as agents for the Association.

Ordered, That they be allowed \$1 50 per day for their service.

The messengers from the Convention, upon request, presented the views and wishes of the Convention to the Association; whereupon

Resolved, That the Clerk be directed to forward to said Convention a parcel of our minutes.

The Moderator announced that the business of the Association was finished, Prayer was offered by Br. Thigpen, and the Association adjourned.

JESSE CRAWFORD, Moderator.

NORVELL ROBERTSON, JR., Clerk.

TABLE.

TABLE OF CHURCHES, DELEGATES, ETC.

		total	copies associa'tn'	associat'ns	dead	ored	nict'd	by let m'st	tised
Antioch,	Marion,	3	6	4	2	1	5	25	REZIN BURNS, Hosea Davis,
Bogue Chitto,	Pike,	10	5	3	2	68	20	5	00
Bethany,	Lawrence,	34	5	7	2	93	55	10	00
Batalla,	"	19	3	2	1	50	30	6	00
Copiah,	Copiah,	2	4	1	1	36	12	3	00
Ebenezer,	Covington,	1	5	1	4	63	35	5	00
Fair River,	Lawrence,	1	1	1	1	69	40	9	00
Friendship,	Marion,	44	2	1	1	19	10	3	00
Gallilee,	Copiah,	15	1	2	2	37	15	3	00
Hebron,	Lawrence,	12	2	2	1	68	30	7	00
Hephzibah,	"	1	8	2	1	31	25	4	50
Harmony,	"	29	2	1	1	45	25	4	50
Hopewell,	Copiah,	6	7	1	1	26	20	4	00
Little River,	Marion,	1	1	1	1	11	8	2	00
Mount Moriah,	Lawrence,	2	1	1	1	22	20	5	00
Mount Zion,	Simpson,	64	6	1	101	40	35	8	00
Mountain Hill,	Pike,	2	1	1	1	46	35	6	00
New Chapel,	Marion,	4	1	1	1	18	15	2	00
New Zion,	Corington,	8	2	3	3	35	15	4	25
New Hope,	Simpson,	1	1	1	1	92	35	8	00
Palestine,	Perry,	4	3	2	1	24	20	4	00
Providence,	ALEX. MCKENZIE, J. STANFORD	33	5	12	2	45	30	8	00
Silver Creek,	JESS CRAWFORD, Wyatt Smith.	66	10	3	3	115	80	22	00
Silver Creek,	Pike,	11	4	1	1	84	40	8	00
Strong River,	Lawrence,	3	3	2	1	14	10	4	00
Society Hill,	Simpson,	40	3	22	1	71	35	8	00
Salem,	John Cox, Jas. R. Cox.	12	4	1	1	54	30	5	00
Union,	E. OWENS, JER. FORTENBERRY.	5	1	2	1	20	15	3	00
Zion Hill,	M. MANNING, J. B. LEWIS.	2	5	2	4	47	25	5	00
Zion Hill,	J. A. BOWELL, BENJ. DELAUGHTER.	7	7	3	4	29	15	5	00
Bethlehem,	Lewis HOWELL, RICH. EVERETT.					17	15	5	00
	Samuel HARPER, W. B. CHANDLER.					20	10	5	00

CIRCULAR LETTER.

CIRCULAR LETTER.

DEAR BRETHREN:

We solicit your serious and prayerful attention to the following considerations:

Christ requires all, and the surrender of less than all is not Christianity.—It follows, then, that if we are doing a particle less than all we can do for the kingdom of Christ, we are incurring a proportion of the guilt of those who are doing nothing, and for the very same reason. The obligation which binds us to take any part in the grand conflict which is waging, not only holds us responsible for doing every thing in our utmost power, but actually regards whatever is short of this as so much opposition, with our cognizance, against him. Let us not suppose, then, that because we are doing something we are sufficiently demonstrating our fidelity to his cause; if we are only doing one-third, so to speak, of what we could do, the other two-thirds, are operating *as ours*, in hostility against him, as truly as that one-third is operating, *as ours*, in his behalf. If there be, for instance, somewhere in the heathen world a certain amount or form of evil which *my agency*, armed with power from heaven, might entirely subdue, and I have aimed at the destruction of only one half of it, the other half must be regarded as *my agency* for upholding the cause of idolatry. If a church, or an individual, support—as some do—a native teacher of Christianity in India, on the condition that he be called by the name of the Christian contributor; and if, while supporting only one, he could support two, he must be regarded as working *here* by two representatives—one for Christ, the other against him. True, the second, or evil agent, has not been named after him, is not supported by him; but inasmuch as he could, by the Divine blessing, be counteracting double the amount of evil influence which he is, that portion of it against which he proclaims no war, and makes no effort, is to be held as working against Christ, with his countenance, and in his name. Precious influence! each grain of which exceeds all calculable value. Well might our Lord be jealous for every particle; since there are but two treasures in the universe, one for Him, and the other for Satan; so that every grain withheld from his, falls into and enriches the other. And well may the Christian regard himself with all the sacredness of a temple, since he cannot yield himself to any other claimant than Christ, even for a moment, without yielding himself, during that moment, to a hostile party. So that in truth, our only escape from partial hostility to Christ, is that of unreserved devotedness to his service.

Christ deserves all.—And what a claim it is—the claim of redemption! Alas, that our familiarity with it should ever diminish its freshness and force; that we do not always feel as if the price had only just been paid—the mystery of the Cross just transpired! To think that there should have been a period in our history when we were lost; lost to ourselves—all our capacity for enjoyment being turned by sin into a felt capacity for suffering; lost to the design of our creation—all our powers of serving Christ being perverted into instruments of hostility against him; lost to the society of heaven—the place which awaited us there to remain eternally vacant; the part we should have taken in the chorus of the blessed, to remain forever unfilled; heaven itself, as far as in us lay, turned into a place of mourning and desolation: lost to God—to the right of beholding, approaching, and adoring the vision of his eternal glory! To think, that, in point of law, we were thus lost as truly as if the hand of justice had seized us, had led us down to the our place in wo, drawn on us the bolts of the dreadful prison, and

as if years of wretchedness and ages of darkness had rolled over us there. Well may we ask ourselves, again and again, how is it we are here; here, in the blessed light of day; here, in the still more blessed light of God's countenance; here, like children sitting in their father's smiles? Why is this? and how has it come to pass? Has justice relaxed its demands? or have the penal flames become extinct? What, know ye not that ye are bought with a price! It is the theme of the universe. Look on that glorious being descending from heaven in the form of God—know ye not “the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,”—that he sought no resting place between his throne and the Cross? Behold that Cross; know ye not that “he loved us and gave himself for us?” that “he bare our sins in his own body on the tree?” Approach nearer, and look on that streaming blood; know ye not “the precious blood of Christ,” and that that blood is the price of your redemption? Hear you not the voice from heaven which now says, “Deliver them from going down to the pit, for I have found a ransom?” Feel you not the Spirit of God drawing you with gentle solicitations and gracious importunities to the feet of Christ? See you not that he who was delivered for your offences, hath been raised again for your justification, and is now waiting to receive the homage of your love? How much owest thou unto thy Lord? Try to compute it. He asks only his due. So that if there be any part of your nature which he has not redeemed, or any thing in your possession for which you are not indebted to him, keep it back, and apply it to some other purpose. But does not the bare suggestion do violence to your new nature? does not every part of that nature resent the very idea, and find a voice to exclaim, “O Lord, I am thy servant, I am thy servant, thou hast loosed my bonds?”

The heathen world needs all.—It is affecting to think that while we are sitting, perhaps in our home, comparatively unmoved, there are, elsewhere, above six hundred millions of our race under the almost undisturbed dominion of Satan; that these myriads are the wretched survivors of untold generations, who have lived and died under the same vassalage; that, as if they were born and were living in hell instead of on earth, the Destroyer is living and walking amongst them; and that almost all the influences under which they pass across the stage of life, and which are perpetually darting and acting upon them from all sides round, are the influences of a system which he has been thousands of years constructing and maturing; to which he has been constantly adding something, and the sole merit of which, in his eyes, consists in the efficacy and certainty with which it invades and destroys them. Such, we may suppose, was the sight which Jesus beheld, when from the mountain's top the tempter meant that he should see only “the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them.” And is it true, that after the gospel has been amongst us nearly two thousand years, that spectacle is to be seen still? Ascend, in thought, the same mount—we might say to the inquirer—and you behold substantially the same vision. Take a hasty glance at them, at least; more, you cannot; for were they to assume the most dense and compacted form, days must have elapsed before they would all have passed. Look down upon them—if the thick darkness which hangs over them will permit; look down, and mark their condition. Listen to the din of the great Babel; do you hear any voice of prayer? do you see any hopeful sign? It is true, they have priests—but they are impostors and murderers; and altars—but they are stained with human blood; and objects of worship—but they “sacrifice to devils and not to God.” Look closer still; and as you look, think of all the elements of influence—ancestry—wealth—numbers—you cannot name one which is not made to minister to their destruction. Enumerate the vices—avarice, sensuality, revenge

—you cannot specify one which is not, not merely embodied, but adored; for these are their gods under other names. You cannot point out a single object in the air, the earth, or the waters, which might be pressed into the service of sin, and which is not actually so employed. You cannot discover a single individual who is not acting on every other being in all that countless mass in confirmation of their common depravity. You cannot name a sense of the body, a faculty of the soul, an evil propensity of our nature, which is not seized and held fast by as many hands as some of their false divinities possess, and which does not lend its willing aid in return. You cannot name a single moment, from birth to death, in which the whole of this infernal machinery is not everywhere in destructive activity, shedding poison, and raining death; an activity, compared with which, the utmost mechanical velocity, or the still greater activity of the material elements themselves, are mere quiet and repose.

And having surveyed this dense array of evil—having explored this living continent of depravity—do you wonder that God does not burn it from the earth?—does not forthwith sweep the whole of these myriads away with the besom of destruction? *Them!* Destroy them! Their guilt is, in one respect, venial, compared with the sin of the Christian church. Their state, fearing as it is, is explicable, compared with the conduct of those who hold in their hands the known means of their rescue, but refuse to employ them.

Look, we entreat you, look at those myriads again. You think, perhaps, that you do see them; many, at least, may flatter themselves that they do; but no, they have not yet—their conduct proves it. See, the countless mass is at worship—before the throne of Satan, glowing as with the heat of an infernal furnace—with rage, lust, and cruelty, for their religious emotions. Look at them again—their demon worship is over; but are they satisfied? How eager their looks! how objectless and restless their movements! how the living mass of misery heaves, and surges, and groans, and travails in pain together!

Look at them once more; they are travellers into eternity; mark, how vast the procession they form, how close their ranks, how continuous the line, how constant and steady the advance! Do you see them now? Then you see that angry cloud which hangs over their ranks—which moves as they move—and which ever and anon emits a lurid flash; it is stored with the materials of judicial wrath. Do you mark them still? Then you see that thousands of them have reached the edge of a tremendous gulf—it is the gulf of perdition, and they are standing on the very brink. Are you sure that you see them? God of mercy! they are falling over—they are gone! And we never, never tried to save them! Father, forgive us, we know not what we do. Saviour of sinners, spare us yet another year. We know they are lost—lost to happiness and lost to thee! We could have told them of thee—shown them thy cross—given them thy gospel—pointed them the way to heaven. But they are lost!

Coming generations require us to consecrate all.—It is the undying self-propagating nature of our moral influence, which invests every thing we do with so much importance; its immediate effect may be trivial, but who shall calculate consequences never ending, ever expanding! Christian parents, the scale on which you give is likely to affect the liberality of your children's children to the remotest generation. Christians, you are living for futurity. The character you impress on the age is not to die with you—it is the legacy you will bequeath to posterity. The influence you are now putting into circulation is not to be limited to the present; it will reach to those you never saw, and descend to other times. Churches of Christ, reflect, traces of your character will reappear ages

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hence, in the churches of India and Africa, China and Japan—of shores yet undiscovered, and nations yet unformed. You are giving Christianity to posterity; what kind of a Christianity are you giving it? a languid, feeble, spiritless thing, or a system instinct with life? Shall it go forth to the world, and down to the future, covered with the honors and repeating the achievements of its first days? or a half-hearted, torpid, self-indulging system, living on the world's sufferance, and struggling on for a bare existence? Remote generations summon us to duty; and adjure us, by the responsibility of our present position—by the bright hopes we cherish of millennial bliss—and by the certainty that the impulse we are now giving to religion will impart a character to that bliss—a lustre or a shade—that we give them the Christianity of Apostolic times, fresh from the Cross, and glowing with the fire of a Paul.

Nothing done for Christ is lost.—Say, what of all the past is lost? the mites of the widow? True, the gift in itself was small, the act trivial; but she has, in high moral effect, been giving them daily ever since. They have multiplied into millions. Those mites have formed an inexhaustable fund; and to the end of time will constitute for the church an ever-augmenting treasury of wealth. What is lost? the labors of those who first took the mission field, and who have already fallen? True, they failed in some of their immediate ends, and fell comparatively unwept. But holy, honored men, your day of moral power is yet to come. Already, your names are our titles; your memory is our inspiration; your noble deeds are our heraldry; your example, a precious part of our inheritance. By the perusal of your tale, shall many a youthful bosom swell with the sacred ambition of living to Christ in heathen lands; and, as he hears your name pronounced with benedictions, or touches the soil which contains your hallowed dust, or opens the sacred page which you first laboriously unlocked to wandering eyes—your memory shall fire his zeal, and in his labors shall you live again. What is lost? the blood of the martyrs? True, they fell. The car of the demon to which they were sacrificed, rolled over them and on; "their ashes flew, no marble tells us whither," the voices which bewailed them sank into silence; the tyranny which crushed them waxed stronger and stronger; and age followed age apparently only to blacken their names, or to proclaim that they had lived and died in vain. But did they? Let the history of Truth, struggling with Error ever since, testify. Never have their sufferings ceased to thrill the general heart.—Long have some of their softest whispers at the stake, been oracles to support the suffering, and watchwords to animate the valiant for the truth.

And such shall be your honored destiny, martyrs of Madagascar! Precious were your deaths in the eyes of your Lord. Precious in our eyes is every drop of your blood. And the time shall come when precious shall be the spot where you were speared in the eyes of your own people. At present they deem you vanquished. But *they* never fail who die for Christ. That land belongs to Him. And when he assumes his right, your wounds shall plead for him; the spear that pierced you shall blossom and bud; your martyrdom, subservient to a higher influence, shall give a resistless impulse to the cause of truth.

That time will come; the time when Christ will have taken, not that island only, but the earth for his possession. The price has been paid—the transfer made—the time for actual possession appointed—the approach of that time divinely indicated. Let us imagine that future period to have come. There is Christendom purged of its corruptions; India without its caste; China without its wall of selfishness; Africa without its chains; earth without its curse. All its kingdoms consolidated into one vast spiritual empire, are happy in the reign of

CIRCULAR LETTER.

Christ, and prostrate at his feet. And will it form no part of the employment of that blessed time, to trace back that grand consummation to all the trains of instrumentality which led to it? It will, doubtless, form part of the occupation of heaven itself. And in the prosecution of that inquiry, will there be one period whose annals shall be referred to with surpassing interest? One, from which that great ocean of results will be found to have derived many of its most important springs and streams of Christian influence? That period will, doubtless, prove our own. And will not he be among the happiest Christians then who perceives that, by embarking his all in the cause of Christ, he has ample revenue of glory to lay at his Saviour's feet?

Young men, remember this. The morning of your life, and the morning of a glorious day, are dawning together. Would you inscribe your names on a page which shall be read with interest by a renovated world? In the great audit, would you stand for more than a unit? Then must you spring to action at once. Delay awhile—and, go where you will, no country will be left for you to be the first to claim for Christ; no language remain for you to consecrate by first pronouncing in it the name of Christ; no single tribe to whom you can present the first bible! Happy deprivation! and is nothing left—no lofty mark for Christian ambition to aim at? Yes, the church has left you one, at least—and that the loftiest of all. There is yet left to you the high distinction of not living to yourselves. Aim at, and exhibit that distinction; and, at the period of retrospection of which we speak, it shall be found that if others began an era of activity, it was yours to eclipse them by commencing an era of devotedness.—*Harris's Great Commission, 1st Edition.*

List of Ministers and their Post Office Address.—ORDAINED.—Jesse Crawford, *Holmesville*; Rezin Burns, *Columbia*; Wm. Fortenberry, *Columbia*; Alex. McKenzie, *Williamsburg*; Alex. Murray, *Georgetown*; Isaac Brakefield, *Georgetown*; Josh. Sandifer, *Georgetown*; Wm. Williams, *Mt. Carmel*; Francis Walker, *Westville*; James Powell, *Westville*; James Murray, *Westville*; Calvin Magee, *China Grove*; Wilkes Honea, *Gallatin*; Willis Magee, *Fordsville*.
LICENTIATES.—John Sanford; Samuel Harper; Needham Lee; Hardy Hoover.
Clerk's address, *Williamsburg*.

Note.—It is rather mortifying to me to be compelled to make an apology for the non-appearance of the Minutes at a due time after the adjournment of the Association. But as the cause was unavoidable, being afflicted with sickness, I hope the members composing the respective Churches of the Association, will not attach blame to the Clerk or me, as every pains was taken to get them out as soon as possible.

M. H. SMITH, Printer.

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OF THE

PEARL RIVER BAPTIST ASSOCIATION.

CONVENED AT STRONG RIVER CHURCH,

SIMPSON COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI,

SEPTEMBER 7TH, 1844.

MONTICELLO:

M. H. SMITH, PRINTER.

1844.

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STRONG RIVER, September 7th, 1844.

THE Pearl River Baptist Association met at the time and place appointed, and Br. J. Murray preached the introductory sermon, from Micah iv, 2.

The Association then, after a short space of time, assembled in the meeting house, and was called to order in the usual form by Br. Jesse Crawford, the former moderator.

The Clerk being absent, Br. James Dear, was appointed Clerk pro. tem.

Letters from thirty-one churches were read, and the delegates took their seats.

Jesse Crawford was re-elected Moderator, Calvin Magee, Clerk, and Simeon Ross, Treasurer.

On invitation, the church at Sardis, Copiah county, and the church at Antioch, Jones county, presented petitionary letters to the Association, which were read and received, and the delegates given the right hand of fellowship.

Visiting ministers were invited to seats with us.

Received correspondence from sister Associations, viz.: From the Union, a letter, by their messenger, William H. Taylor. Br. Allen his colleague failed. From the Mt. Pisgah, a letter and parcel of minutes, by their messengers, Brs. John P. Martin and James Merchant. From the Leaf River, a letter and parcel of minutes, her messengers failed. From the Eastern Louisiana, a parcel of minutes, by their messenger, Br. David M. Chaney, Wm. C. Sibley, his colleague failed. Received no communication from the Mississippi.

Agreed to continue correspondence with sister Associations, and appointed Br. McKenzie to write to the Mississippi; Brs. Crawford and Magee, messengers: Br. Magee to write to the Union; Brs. Sandifer and Mullins, messengers: Br. Mullins to write to the Leaf River, Brs. McKenzie and Murray, messengers: Br. Powel to write to the Mt. Pisgah; Brs. Murray, Hall and Powel, messengers: Br. J. Mikell to write to the Eastern Louisiana: Brs. Magee and McKenzie, messengers.

The following resolution was offered by Br. McKenzie and adopted.

Resolved, That we appoint a committee of five, in different parts of our Association, to take into consideration and report on the destitution in our bounds, and the most efficient means to supply said destitution.

Appointed committees, as follows, viz:

On Preaching—Brs. Powel, Albritton, Wood and Watts.

On Finance—Brs. Hutchins, Simmons and Chandler.

To arrange the business and revise the Circular—Brs. McKenzie, Murray and Brakefield, with the Moderator and Clerk.

On Nominations—Brs. Walker, Sandifer and Mullins.

On Destitution—Brs. Powel, Gardner, S. Mullins, John Watts and John Simmons.

The committee on preaching, reported for the Sabbath, that they had appointed Brs. Magee, Martin and Crawford, to preach in the order of their names, and Br. Price to close the service.

The following resolution offered by Br. McKenzie, and adopted.

Whereas, a number of our brethren, both of our delegates and corresponding messengers, are detained from meeting with us, on account of affliction—Therefore, be it

Resolved, That we make the case of our afflicted brethren and their families, the subject of devoted and fervent prayer during this meeting.

Adjourned until Monday, 9 o'clock, A. M.
Prayer by Br. Taylor.

MONDAY, September 9th, 1844.

The Association met pursuant to adjournment.

Br. Sandifer prayed.

The rules of decorum read.

Br. McKenzie, from the committee of arrangement and revision, made a report which was received and agreed to.

Appointed Br. Reuben Watts, to fill the vacancy of Br. John Watts on destitution.

The Circular letter prepared by Br. A. McKenzie, was read and adopted.

Br. Harper asked leave of absence, which was granted.

The letters to corresponding associations, read and adopted.

Br. Jonathan Price asked leave of absence, which was granted.

The committee on nominations, made a report, which was received, and the committee discharged.

Br. Calvin Magee, was appointed to preach the introductory, to the next association, and Br. Joshua Sandifer, his alternate.

To write the circular letter, James Murray.

To preach the annual Missionary Sermon, Br. Wm. Fortinberry, and Br. A. McKenzie, his alternate.

To prepare and superintend the printing, and distribution of the minutes, the Clerk.

The following persons appointed to constitute the missionary board, for the ensuing year, viz:

Hosea Davis, Simeon Ross, A. Johnson, J. T. Moor, I. Kees, H. G. Barrett, T. Hutchins, Wm. Fortinberry, W. Williams, Joshua Sandifer, J. B. Jordan, James Murray, G. Mullins, B. Williams, Calvin Magee, John Watts, I. Breakfield, A. McKenzie, Jesse Crawford, M. Brady, V. T. Powel, James R. Cox, E. Owens, I. B. Lewis, T. Gibson, L. Howel, S. Harper, S. Mullins and J. Ford.

Report of Committee on Destitution—In casting our eyes over the territory of our Association, we are astonished to see as many neighborhoods, without regular preaching, as we find without mentioning the vast scope of country laying all along our Southern boundary, and reaching down to the sea coast, nearly all of which is destitute. We find immediately in our midst, many important stands, which we are sorry to say are entirely, or partly destitute of Baptist preaching. The most of our villages are destitute; Monticello, a place of considerable interest, a place where the Baptist standard might with an efficient Minister easily be raised, is at this time entirely destitute of Baptist preaching. Columbia, Williamsburg, Westville and Holmesville; besides a number of other places of interest, are as yet unoccupied, at least only partially supplied. However, the destitution of some of our villages, are partially supplied by churches located within the neighborhood, but many of the neighborhoods are entirely destitute; the most important, are the upper settlements of Little River and Black Creek, the neighborhood of Hoskins' Ferry; and below on Leaf River, the neighborhood of Big Bahala, and below near Pearl River, besides others, too numerous to mention.—All the above named places, are places of interest and should be supplied immediately, with Baptist preaching; and as the most efficient means of supplying these places, we recommend the following measure, to be adopted by the Association, and carried out by the churches.

Moved, That we recommend to the several churches, to take immediate

measures, to have under their care and direction, one destitute neighborhood, which they will by their own efforts, have the Gospel preached to, by selecting a Minister, if they have none of their own, to preach regular, and look to them for a remuneration for their labor at that place. SAMUEL J. MULLINS,

CHAIRMAN.

Report of Committee on Finance—For Associational purposes, \$8 32: For Home Missionary purposes, \$99 32. The receipts for the present year were—for Associational purposes, \$154 90: For H. M. purposes, \$51 21.

On Petitions—A Letter of dismission was granted to the George Chitto church. Agreed to hold the next association with the church at Face River, Lawrence county, to convene on Saturday before the second Lord's Day, in September, 1845.

The following resolution, offered by Br. J. Murray and accepted.

Resolved, That the time of holding our Association, be changed from Saturday before the second Lord's Day in September, to Saturday before the third Sunday in October.

Agreed to reconsider the resolution offered by Br. Murray.

Br. Murray withdrew the resolution.

Appointed A. McKenzie, to report on the death of our much beloved Br. Resin Burns, immediately, as follows:

Whereas, in the dispensation of a kind Providence, it has pleased him to remove from our christian society, and ministerial usefulness, our much lamented and beloved Br. Resin Burns, therefore

Resolved, That we acknowledge this mournful circumstance, as the hand of an indulgent and allwise God, for our benefit as a divine admonition for us, also to be ready.

Resolved, That we deeply sympathise with the friends and churches, who are left to mourn and are destitute on the account of this melancholy circumstance.

Resolved, That devout prayers be offered by this body, especially, for the destitution occasioned by the above death.

The Moderator sang a hymn, and entered immediately on Missionary business.

Called for reports—the vice-president of the Missionary board, viz: Br. J. Murray, stated by the failure of the secretary, the board had no written reports.

Br. Crawford, our Missionary, presented a written report, which was read and received.

Ordered that a statistical table from the above report be printed with these minutes.

Table—Number of days travelled 50—number of miles 49—number of sermons preached 53—number of lectures 2—number of exhortations 2—number of persons 2,469—amount received \$8 00.

Resolved, That the Treasurer be instructed to draw the money and pay Br. Crawford for his labor.

Moved and seconded, that our Missionaries be allowed per day, for their labor, \$1 00.

After some debate, the question was taken, and lost; and the same sum allowed as last year, \$1 50.

Appointed Missionaries and Agents.

1st. Br. Crawford, to ride 50 days, and the field of his labors, to be East of Pearl River, and South of this Association, as far as the State line.

2d. Br. McKenzie, for 20 days, in the same field.

3d. Br. J. Murray, for 30 days, in the same field.

— 5th. Brs. J. Sandifer, and A. Murray, for fifteen days each, and their field on the West side of Pearl River.

Appointed the first meeting of the board, Friday before the 5th Sunday in December, A. D. 1844, and afterwards, the Friday before every 5th Sunday, until our next association.

Appointed the first meeting, to be held with the Silver Creek Church, Pike county.

The 2d, with the Hebron Church, Lawrence county.

The 3d, with the Ebenezer Church, Covington county.

The following resolution offered by Br. McKenzie, and adopted.

Whereas, agreeable to the request of this body, last year to the churches, to send up at this meeting, their wishes, relative to becoming auxiliary to the Convention, and the result is, we are not willing at the present. Therefore

Resolved, That we are not opposed to the object of the Convention, but possessing all the facilities necessary for the appropriation of our funds within ourselves.

Therefore, it is unnecessary to connect ourselves with that body at the present.

Resolved, That the names of the Ministers of this Association, their Post office address, be printed with these minutes.

The Moderator announced that the business of the Association was finished.

Prayer was offered by Br. Price, and the Association adjourned.

JESSE CRAWFORD, MODERATOR.

CALVIN MAGEE, Clerk.

THE SABBATH.

Law. "Remember the SABBATH day to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the SABBATH of the LORD thy God. In it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man servant, nor thy maid servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger, that is within thy gates. For in six days the LORD made Heaven and Earth, the Sea, and all that in them is; and rested the seventh day; wherefore the LORD blessed the SABBATH day, and hallowed it." Exodus, 20, viii, ix, x, xi.

DEAR BRETHREN—We call your prayerful attention to the above LAW, and a few thoughts on the very important, and much neglected subject, of a proper observance of the Lord's day.

The above is a copy of the law, as it was written by the hand of God, on the tables of stone, on Mount Sinai, for the government of the Jews, and in Ex. 31, xiv, we have the penalty of the same law, in the form of a Civil Statute, which is DEATH.

Now, no one ever doubted, that this law was obligatory on the Jews, from the fact of its being delivered immediately to them, and why there should be a doubt of its being binding on all God's rational creatures, remains a mystery!—But there appears to be, or have been doubts whether the law is binding on all, because all had not an equal part in the first covenant; when it is plain, that ~~we~~ a religious sense, in which the SABBATH was particularly enjoined, *all*, always had the same right to it, and received the same benefit from it. And if we consider the nature and intention of the LAW, we will at once see the fallacy of the argument; for the LAW was moral in its nature, and was intended to govern moral creatures;

CIRCULAR LETTER.

and the Gentiles are as much the moral creatures of God, as the Jews; and have as much need of a law to govern them, and lead them to God. Had no doubt the moral law was intended for a rule of conduct for all God's moral creatures; this is certain from God's unchangeable character, and impartiality, in bestowing moral blessings on all, and requiring moral obedience of all, and also, from the fact of the moral condition of all being the *same*. And moreover, the intention of the **SABBATH**, is for the benefit of his people and the glory of his name, and as he has extended his grace to all, so, he expects glory of all, in honor of his Sabbaths, and in a religious sense, all are under the same law, and must be governed by the same precept, in keeping the Sabbath, for there is no other precept, and of necessity, they need the same law to govern them. And again, how can one part of the law be more binding than another, all proceeded from the same source, and for the same purpose, and no law can, when once in being, cease, except it be repealed, or expires by limitation; neither of which can be true in regard to the law of the Sabbath, or any of the moral law; for then of necessity, God must change, for no power can repeal a law inferior to that which created it, and the *same* power cannot repeal it, until it change, but it is too degrading to God's character to admit such things, only for argument sake. But once more, if the law is repealed, where is the repeal act? it *cannot be found in the Bible*, and where is the evidence of the limitation? can it be found? No! for it shall be a sign between me and thee, throughout your generations, and it is for a perpetual covenant, &c. Ex. 31, xiii, xvi, xvii.

But if it be repealed, or has expired by limitation, why is it observed at all, it certainly is dead! then we have no Sabbath. And if one item of the law has ceased, all the law has by the same rule; for all was made at the same time and for the same purpose. But one will ask; cannot one item be a little modified, so as to allow some more privilege on the Sabbath, without effecting the character of the law? We answer *no!* without provision was made in the act itself, and we find no such provision in the law, therefore, we must have the law as it is, *it must stand*, and we must obey it, *as it is*. This places us in an awful dilemma indeed, but it cannot be helped. Our only alternative is to obey the law and keep the Sabbath as it requires, for if the Gentiles are God's moral creatures, they are under his moral government of necessity. Nor can we justify ourselves in a loose observance of the Sabbath, from the time of its celebration being altered, from the seventh to the first day of the week; for this circumstance cannot effect the law, nor change the manner of observing the Sabbath in the least degree; nor did this change arise out of any defect in the law, or the time of celebrating the Sabbath; but merely, because having a new dispensation, a new mediator, a new mode of worship, therefore a new day of the weekly computation, that all things might be new! It is not so much the *seventh or first* day, as one day of rest, after six days labor; for that is the object of the law to keep one seventh of our time holy, and there is no way for it to lose anything by the change, for it now being connected with Christ's resurrection, the most memorable event of the Gospel dispensation, it is more enforced, and obligatory on christians in honor of his triumphant resurrection. And that this change was received and practised by the primitive christians, is abundantly plain, both from the Testament and ecclesiastical history; and is generally admitted among christians. Then if these arguments be true, we have a Sabbath, and a law to enforce it, which law is the fourth commandment, and we either must have this law for our guide or abolish the Sabbath entirely; there is no alternative, and if we admit the law, we must admit the whole law, and abide by it. Therefore, Brethren, this is a matter of much importance to us as a denomination. The Sabbath is a sign between God and his people, Ex. 31, xiii, and will be a sign to the end of time. The most awful denunciations of God's displeasure are upon the Sabbath breaker, for he is jealous for his Sabbath. But

one will say, how are we to keep it holy? we are not perfect! no! we are not perfect, indeed; but it does not take a perfect man to keep the Sabbath holy, as the law requires; i. e., to leave off all work, one day in seven. Six days shalt thou labor, and do *all* thy work, none is to be done the Seventh, not any, not so much as to see after the stock, nor to travel to and from market, nor settle accounts, nor do little tradings, nor walk over the farm laying plans, nor go visiting for worldly conversation or amusements, nor do little jobs about the farm and house, no, nor lounge about the house, as if the holy time was a burden; and such like, all of which are flagrant violations of the Sabbath, and no one may plead for an excuse, that he cannot keep the law, for he is bound to do it. God requires it, neither may he plead that Christ has kept the law in his stead; he did keep this law as well as all others, but not to lessen our obligation to keep it holy—but the *christian's obligations* are greater, from this circumstance, for Christ says, *keep my commandments*, and again, *follow me*. Now, if we obey him, we will keep the Sabbath, and we cannot obey him without; neither can we claim to be his followers, for his day is a sign between him and thee, and if we observe the Sabbath aright, he has promised us a blessing, but in vain may we claim a blessing from him when we indulge in flagrant violations of his holy day. Not only are we bound to keep the Sabbath ourselves, but we are responsible for our children, and our servants, and our stranger. All their sins of Sabbath breaking are charged to us.—O! what a thought, all these sins on us besides our own! yes, they are; and you are bound for them as long as you live, at least as long as they are under you.

Then there is much for the christian to do, even after he joins the church.—Yes, *then* is the time for him to begin to do, and he has no time to spare. The Lord has done great things for us, and requires us to let our lights shine. This we cannot do, except we keep the Sabbath.

Dear Brethren, in conclusion, suffer a word of exhortation. The Sabbath is a blessed institution; and we as a denomination do much neglect it, our character is fast sinking on this very thing; nothing is more honorable than to obey God; and nothing can be better for his people, than to obey him. A speedy reformation in this matter, is absolutely necessary to save our sinking character; and nothing can be more necessary for our prosperity and peace. Therefore, let the ministers preach, and impress the solemn duties of the Sabbath more; and the most influential members of the church lay the example; and let their light shine; and let the line of discipline be used with the stubborn unruly. The time has come, when such conduct as some of us are guilty of ought not to be tolerated among enlightened christians. Let us no longer indulge in profaning God's holy day, but arouse to the work of a speedy reformation, and may the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all, Amen.

For further information on this subject we refer you to the Circular of 1837, on the subject of the Sabbath.

List of Ministers and their Post office address.—ORDAINED.—Jesse Crawford, Holmesville; Wm. Fortinberry, Columbia; Alex. McKenzie, Williamsburg; Alex. Murray, Georgetown; Isaac Brakefield, Georgetown; Joshua Sandifer, Georgetown; Wm. Williams, Mt. Carmel; Francis Walker, Westville; James Powel, Westville; James Murray, Westville; Calvin Magee, China Grove; Willis Magee, Fordsville; M. Brady, Monticello.—LICENTIATES.—John Sanford, Williamsburg; Samuel Harper, Westville; Hardy Hoover, County line; Samuel B. Mullins, Gallatin; V. T. Powel, Westville, Gabriel Mullins, Holmesville; John Strayhan, Janesville.

TABLE

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